

Delaware One of Eight States Chosen by the National Governors Association to Participate in Health Care Data Initiative

WILMINGTON, Del. – In support of a movement to transform how health care is delivered and paid for in the state, Delaware was one of eight states chosen to participate in a National Governors Association initiative to harness data systems to inform health policymaking. Joining Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Vermont and Washington, Delaware's team will receive guidance in creating a strategic plan for data analytics in support of policy and decision-making in its Medicaid program.

Over the course of the 16-month project, Delaware's team will receive technical assistance and engage in cross-state learning to help advance its capacity to use and analyze data in the Medicaid program within the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). About 230,000 Delawareans are served by Medicaid, the shared state and federal health insurance program for people from low-income households, seniors eligible for long-term care and individuals with disabilities.

"This NGA data initiative will help us grow our ability to analyze how Medicaid dollars are spent, the health of the populations we serve and how well the health care system is doing in meeting the care needs of our clients," said Governor John Carney. "Harnessing data is an important way to measure and evaluate our progress as we shift from a health care system that is based on volume of care to one that is based on health outcomes of patients."

In January, DHSS' Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) signed value-based purchasing contracts with its two managed care organizations (MCOs) – Highmark Health Options Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware and AmeriHealth Caritas Delaware. As part of the contracts, seven key client care measures will be monitored, including management of diabetes cases, asthma management, cervical and breast cancer screenings, obesity management, timeliness of prenatal care and 30-day hospital readmission rates.

Medicaid data also will be an important component of Delaware's work on health care spending and quality benchmarks. In February, Governor Carney signed Executive Order 19 creating a 13-member Advisory Group to make recommendations to DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker on health care cost and quality benchmarks across Delaware's health care system, including employer-based coverage, Medicare and Medicaid. Secretary Walker will provide her formal recommendations to the Governor this summer. Beginning in 2019, Delaware will measure the total cost of health care, the first step in increasing transparency in how health care dollars are spent.

*"Our Medicaid team has launched several initiatives to improve the quality of care for our Medicaid clients, to address the social determinants of health and to encourage value-based payments," said **DHSS Secretary Walker**. "The NGA assistance will offer us support as we plan, implement and evaluate these special efforts. We need data to develop baselines, track progress and analyze the results."*

Staff from the National Governors Association will provide in-state visits and ongoing technical assistance throughout the project including research, consultations, facilitating meetings with experts, sharing examples from other states and reviewing state plans.

The Delaware team is led by Elizabeth Brown, Medical Director for the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance, and includes Steve Groff, Director of DMMA; Steven Costantino, Director of Health Care Reform for DHSS; Troy McDaniel, Director of Information Systems for DMMA; and Joe Bryant, Health Policy Advisor for Governor Carney.

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